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TAGS: [PREL](#) [KUNR](#) [UNGA](#) [UNSC](#)

SUBJECT: UNGA: UNSC REFORM: LOW-KEY PLENARY DEBATE GIVEN  
ONGOING OEWG DISCUSSIONS

REF: A. USUN NEW YORK 1118

[¶](#)B. USUN NEW YORK 1095

[¶](#)11. (SBU) Summary: The General Assembly met November 18-20 to discuss Security Council expansion, as well as the annual Report on the Security Council (reported ref A). Given the November 11 and 17 meetings of the Open-ended Working Group (OEWG) (ref B), the plenary debate on Council expansion was relatively subdued with more member states dedicating a larger portion of their remarks to the Security Council's annual report and not to Council expansion. Nevertheless, the Group of Four (G-4) clearly articulated their reasons for pursuing Council expansion, including an increase in the number of permanent seats, while the Uniting for Consensus (UFC) bloc rebutted the need for permanent seats and said a much more egalitarian approach would be to only expand the number of non-permanent seats, while Pakistan suggested that regions should select permanent members. Several delegations suggested an interim solution, such as longer-term, renewable appointments, and a number voiced support for an expansion that can garner the broadest possible political agreement and that it be part of broader UN reform. The OEWG met again December 5 to discuss the framework for intergovernmental negotiations and plans to meet on January 19 to discuss modalities. Intergovernmental negotiations are on track to be launched in February 2009 in an informal plenary of the General Assembly. End summary.

A number of states echo similar themes in U.S. position

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[¶](#)12. (SBU) A number of states echoed key parts of the U.S. position on Security Council expansion which Ambassador Wolff delivered in the U.S. statement (posted on USUN's Internet website). On the theme of broadest possible agreement, the Russian Perm Rep stressed in his statement that new problems of Security Council legitimacy would emerge if member states pursued merely the two-thirds number of states required to amend the UN Charter since a significant portion of the membership would be left alienated, particularly a number of highly influential states, which would reduce the Council's prestige. He said Russia supports a target of the & broadest possible agreement<sup>8</sup> that would be significantly higher than the two-thirds majority. (Note: Decision 62/557 calls for the "widest possible political acceptance." End note.) Canada and Mexico also highlighted the same point. The UK Perm Rep expressed support for pursuing the broadest possible consensus for a change to the Charter.

[¶](#)13. (SBU) On the theme that Security Council reform must be

part of broader UN reform, Argentine Perm Rep said, "Reform of the Security Council is a complement to the reform of the UN organization." The Turkish DPR stated, "While focusing on Security Council reform, we should not ignore other aspects of UN reform, especially revitalization of the work of the General Assembly," and he specifically pointed out that a parallel process of GA reform should be started, since SC and GA reform are so interrelated. The Kuwaiti representative expressed support for reform of all of UN bodies but especially supported SC reform. The Mexican Oرم Rep also voiced support for wider UN reform.

Three Permanent Members  
raise interim solution

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¶4. (SBU) The French Perm Rep said that one could not govern a twenty-first century world with twentieth century institutions. While France supports new permanent membership for Germany, Brazil, India, Japan, and an African seat, he said that the only reform proposal that could likely enjoy two-thirds of the membership's support is an interim solution. He said a third category of Council seats with longer-term, renewable appointments should be considered. He also suggested that at the end of a trial period, those seats could be transformed into permanent seats. The UK Perm Rep also expressed support for an interim solution, or what he termed the "transitional approach." The Russian Perm Rep said Russia was prepared to consider any proposal, including an interim decision, that was based on broad agreement and would not lead to a schism among the member states which would weaken the organization overall.

¶5. (SBU) The Chinese Perm Rep stated that any reform plan that did not have the support of the African countries would not have China's support. He noted that reform should also result in smaller countries enjoying more opportunities to participate more substantively in the Council's deliberations.

Calls for regional seats

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¶6. (SBU) The Pakistani Perm Rep suggested that the African proposal of having the region choose the permanent member might garner more support than the G-4's current slate of specific countries for permanent membership, which he argued alienates neighbor states. (Comment: This proposal would undercut the U.S. position that country candidates for permanent membership must have demonstrated the ability to deal with global, not just regional, challenges, and have strong commitments to human rights, democracy, and non-proliferation, and provide substantial peacekeeping or financial contributions to the UN. End comment.) The Bahraini Perm Rep specified that Arab States should be specifically allocated a non-permanent seat on the Council, not just as part of the African or Asian Groups, and it should be rotated amongst the Arab Group. The Spanish Perm Rep expressed support for seats for trans-regional groups like the OIC and the Arab League. The Saudi representative went further and said, given that 30 percent of the General Assembly are members of the OIC or the Arab League, that constituency should be given a permanent seat.

Slovenian plan for an enlarged  
Council with more frequent rotation

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¶7. (SBU) The Slovenian Perm Rep reiterated the proposal outlined by the Slovenian President during the General Debate that the Council's membership should be expanded in three directions, leaving the total membership of the reformed Council, including the current P-5, at 25. First, six additional permanent seats for each of the world's regions should be added. She said an additional category of six non-permanent members with more frequent rotation is also

needed. Twelve countries would be selected to fill those six non-permanent seats and would serve alternating two-year terms for a total period of twelve years. Finally, eight more non-permanent members should be elected in accordance with the principle of equitable geographic distribution.

G-4 (plus South Africa)

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¶8. (SBU) The Japanese Perm Rep gave a relatively toned-down statement, focused more on the need for transparency and accountability in the Council than on Council expansion. He did note that for the Council to reflect the requirements "of the world of today, not the world of yesterday" reform of its composition is urgently needed and now is the time to move to intergovernmental negotiations. The Brazilian Perm Rep argued that restricting reform to the addition of non-permanent members as proposed by the UFC, preserved the status quo, and would further distort the proportion of members in both categories. She argued that any expansion of the Council should balance the composition of permanent and non-permanent members to ensure greater representation and effectiveness of the Council.

¶9. (SBU) The Indian Perm Rep also spoke about the need to add permanent members, noting that in 1964, the Council had expanded only its non-permanent members, and the lack of expansion of permanent seats had only been exacerbated. Non-permanent members, he said, had not been able to implement their ideas, to prevent the encroachment of the Council beyond its competence according to the Charter, or even to improve the access of non-members, especially small states. The German Perm Rep lamented the fact that the PGA's original timeline for inter-governmental negotiations had been pushed back and questioned the announcement of the postponement before all of the members of the OEWG had been given a chance to voice their concerns. The South African Deputy Perm Rep expressed South Africa's intention to pursue the Ezulwini Consensus and disappointment that

intergovernmental negotiations had been postponed until February, noting that intergovernmental negotiations should not be subject to the timetable of the OEWG.

UFC

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¶10. (SBU) The Italian Perm Rep noted "a reform centered on national permanent seats would be more divisive for the membership, provoking national rivalries." He stressed, "We must not perpetuate a Security Council of the few. We want a new Security Council in which every country can recognize itself and feel a sense of ownership." The Mexican Perm Rep spoke about the need to include Security Council reform within the general reform of the United Nations and stressed that an increase in permanent seats would serve to generate fresh inequalities in the Organization and negatively affect its effectiveness. The Republic of Korea Perm Rep outlined principles that should serve as the basis for intergovernmental negotiations: enhanced regional representation through renewable non-permanent seats; respect States' sovereign equality; ensure equitable geographic distribution; strengthen the Council's democratic underpinnings; solidify ownership of the reform process by accommodating interests of all States and regional Groups; and increase the opportunity of all States to serve in the Council. The Spanish Perm Rep favored an expansion of non-permanent seats because those members of the Security Council would be accountable to the wider membership for their behavior.

Next steps

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¶11. (SBU) The OEWG met for its third and fourth meetings of the 63rd session on December 5 to discuss the framework of the upcoming intergovernmental negotiations. While 30 member

states spoke on December 5, the statements fell broadly into the following three categories:

-- The Uniting for Consensus members argued for a specific framework for intergovernmental negotiations which was presented by Spain and Argentina and backed by Turkey, Italy, Canada, and Pakistan. (Note: The draft framework proposed is based upon a UFC paper circulated in November that was e-mailed to IO/UNP. End note.)

-- The G-4 and its supporters argued that the rules of procedure of the General Assembly can serve as a framework for intergovernmental negotiations.

-- The African Group reiterated their support for the Ezulwini Consensus which stipulates two permanent seats with veto for Africa, as well as five non-permanent seats for African.

¶12. (SBU) The OEWG is scheduled to meet January 19 to discuss modalities and then will meet once more in January to finalize its discussion before the PGA briefs the informal plenary of the GA before February 1.

Khalilzad